Seattle Gay and Lesbian Book Club unzips Gay lit

by Scott Wittet
Special to the SGN

One of my friends complains that his book club spends more time negotiating the next book than talking about the current one. Another jibe that her group is really “a drinking club with a book problem.” The Seattle Gay and Lesbian Book Club at Dunshee House differs.

Nick DiMartino, creator and facilitator of the club, is a playwright, novelist, book reviewer, bookseller, and avid reader. He selects the books, which range from classic authors (Genet, Colette, Gide, Forster, Murdoch) to award winners (Patti Smith’s National Book Award-winning Just Kids) to the classics (the outrageously funny Satyricon) to graphic novels (Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home and Howard Cruse’s Stuck Rubber Baby).

When I first saw SGN ads for Dunshee House’s group two years ago, I assumed DiMartino had a grant to build Gay and Lesbian community. Then I learned that he was doing all this without any support. I asked him about his efforts.

Scott Wittet: What are you reading for June?


Wittet: It’s unusual for book groups to meet weekly. How does that work?

DiMartino: Some members come every Wednesday. Some come once or twice a month. For busy people, four opportunities mean not having to worry about missing out. And spreading the discussion over a month allows us to approach topical questions in depth, for readers to dive back into the text and explore thoughts different from their own.

Wittet: How do you choose the books?

DiMartino: The selections are usually paperback and they’re discounted for club members at University Book Store. You often can find them used or at the library. The club can be very satisfying, and people who have a positive response reading come back to read another book. Everyone wins.

The Seattle Gay and Lesbian Book Club meets every Wednesday from 6 to 7:15 pm at Dunshee House (303 17th Ave. E.) on Capitol Hill. Feel free to just show up. For more information, contact Nick at nickd martin@earthlink.net.